

Rev. Jennifer Brooks - Embodiment

Written by
Tuesday, 09 May 2017 00:00



It was a warm spring day and I pedaled as fast as possible along Rustic Bridge Road, leaning into the turns. I wasn't really going very fast, but fast enough to be exhilarating, especially on the downhills. Joy bubbled up from deep inside. All my senses were cheering me on. The wind was in my teeth. I flew.

Ahead I spotted two children, perhaps 8 years old, pedaling madly toward me on their little bikes. Waves of exhilaration preceded them. They grinned fiercely as they leaned forward over the handlebars, obviously striving to go as fast as they could. They passed me in a split second, ignoring me completely. The wind was in their teeth. They flew.

In the whirl and flash of their passing, wonderment arose. I didn't simply remember being eight years old and riding my bike like that; I felt eight years old again. The thrill of effort and motion; the instinctive grace of balance; the connection to the bicycle and through it to the ground; the air on my face and in my lungs: it has always felt like this.

In our high-tech society, too often we live in our heads. Our fingers move on the keyboard or the TV remote or to tap on an app on a mobile device. Perhaps we make a special trip, by car, to the gym or the pool. What have we lost?

For me, riding my bicycle has always been about something more than transportation or recreation. It renews my mind's connection to my body. No matter how short my two-wheeled jaunt, I'm back in my body again. I renew myself as a physical being.

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When I was in the bike shop a week ago, I looked long and thoughtfully at the three-wheeled bicycle that will be mine when two wheels become unmanageable. I recognized that my body and mind crave a connection to earth and air. I wondered about the increasing limitations of age and ability. How can I nourish that magical sense of embodiment when sheer physicality becomes more difficult?

It seems that mind and spirit require an awareness of body just as much as body needs mind and spirit. Why live half a life, cut off from the heritage of evolution and Earth? Who am I if I cannot feel the air on my face, touch the soil, smell a rose? In winter, especially, it's so easy to settle into the sofa with a cup of tea and a good book.

But spring is here. My embodied time is all too short. My prayer is that I allow the beautiful world to call me, again and again, into the natural world and my natural self.

- Rev. Jennifer